

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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O R 030912Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5792

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: STIRRINGS IN THE CHURCHES - GOVERNMENT GAUGHT OFF GROUND -  
ARREST OF YI U-CHONG

REF: (A) SEOUL 1490 DTG 280437Z FEB 76, (B) SEOUL 1419

DTG 260730Z FEB 76, (C) STATE 050143 DTG 020057Z MAR 76

SUMMARY: ROKG WAS CAUGHT OFF BALANCE ON MARCH 1 INDEPENDENCE DAY WHEN 500 PEOPLE ATTENDED ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICE AT CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL DURING WHICH STATEMENT WAS READ BY YI U-CHONG, WIFE OF FORMER PRESIDENT YUN PO-SUN AND HEAD OF KOREAN CHURCH WOMEN UNITED, CALLING FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMANDING PRESIDENT PAK STEP DOWN. STATEMENT BORE NAMES OF 12 PERSONS INCLUDING KIM TAE-CHUNG, YUN PO-SUN AND KIM KWON-SOK. GOVERNMENT HAS REACTED QUICKLY BY TAKING EIGHT PERSONS INTO CUSTODY. EM-9 CHARGES MAY RESULT. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MARCH 1 INDEPENDENCE DAY, APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE GATHERED AT MYONGDONG CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL FOR ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE AND MEETING. DURING MEETING YI U-CHONG WIFE OF FORMER  
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PRESIDENT YUN PO-SUN AND HEAD OF KOREAN CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

READ STATEMENT CALLING FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY AND BASIC FREEDOMS. STATEMENT ALSO CRITICIZED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN KOREA STATING THAT GOVERNMENT LEADING COUNTRY TO ECONOMIC BANKRUPTCY WITH FOREIGN DEBT AND ONLY WAY TO AVOID ECONOMIC CATASTROPHE AND REGAIN CONFIDENCE COUNTRY HAS LOST IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES IS FOR PAK CHUNG-HUI REGIME TO STEP DOWN. CATHOLIC PRIEST ALSO READ STATEMENT ABOUT HARSH TREATMENT OF POET KIM CHI-HA.

2. ROKG AUTHORITIES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY THE MEETING AND THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT STATEMENT. REV KIM KWON-SOK TOLD EMBOFF THAT MEETING HAD BEEN PLANNED IN GREAT SECRECY. FOLLOWING MEETING, KCIA AGENT ASSIGNED TO NCCK TOLD HIM IN ANGER THAT MEETING AND STATEMENT CONSTITUTED DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND WOULD BE MET WITH STRONG MEASURES.

3. REV KIM SAID THAT MAIN ORGANIZERS WERE GROUP OF PROTESTANT MINISTERS FORCED OUT OF HANKUK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND YONSEI UNIVERSITY AFTER THEIR ARREST IN 1974 FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. THIS GROUP NOW HOLDS SERVICES IN DOWNTOWN CHURCH AND ARE COLLECTIVELY KNOWN AS "THE GALILEE CHURCH". YI U-CHONG ATTENDS THESE SERVICES WHICH ARE CLOSELY WATCHED AND OCCASIONALLY DENIED BY AUTHORITIES. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENT WAS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PRIESTS CORPS FOR THE REALIZATION OF JUSTICE. CORPS ATTRACTS YOUNGER, ACTIVIST PRIESTS AND IS HEADED BY FATHER HAM SE-UNG. ACCORDING TO REV. KIM KWON-SOK, MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS STRUGGLED WITH THEIR CONSCIENCES AND FINALLY DECIDED THEY MUST RISK ALL WITH INDEPENDENCE DAY MEETING AND STATEMENT.

4. PRINTED STATEMENT WAS GIVEN TO MEMBERS OF PRESS EVENING BEFORE MEETING AND AUTHORITIES ARE REPORTEDLY ANGRY THAT PRESS DID NOT REPORT IT TO THEM. AP RAN STORY WHICH APPEARED IN MARCH 4 PACIFIC EDITION OF STARS AND STRIPES WHICH IS CIRCULATED IN KOREA. REV. KIM TOLD EMBOFF THAT ORGANIZERS OF MEETING HOPED FOR WIDEST POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE. STORY HAS NOT APPEARED IN KOREAN PRESS.

5. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MEETING ON MARCH 1, YI U-CHONG (MRS. YUN PO-SUN) WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND IS STILL IN PRISON. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MRS. YUN WAS MAJOR ORGANIZER AND PARTICIPANT. IN AFTERNOON OF MARCH 2, REV. KIM KWON-SOK WAS PICKED UP BY POLICE FOR QUESTIONING. HE SAID THAT HE TOLD POLICE HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT MEETING AND HAD NOT SIGNED THE STATEMENT THOUGH HIS NAME WAS ON IT. SINCE HE DID NOT ATTEND MEETING, HE WAS RELEASED AFTER A FEW HOURS. HE BELIEVES HE WILL PROBABLY BE PICKED UP AGAIN. OTHERS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY ARE: REV. MUN TONG-HWAN (STEVEN MOON), REV. MUN IK-HWAN AND HIS WIFE,

AHN PYONG-MU (FORMER YONSEI PROF.), SO NAM-TONG (FORMER YONSEI PROF.), UN MYONG-KI (MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE ROK), YI HAE-TONG, PASTOR OF THE CHURCH WHERE THE GALILLEE GROUP HOLD SERVICES. WE HAVE HEARD BUT HAVE YET TO CONFIRM THAT ONE CATHOLIC PRIEST HAS BEEN DETAINED AND A SEARCH IS ON FOR FATHER HAM SE-UNG. ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT AT THIS EARLY POINT, EM-9 CHARGES ARE LIKELY TO BE BROUGHT AGAINST SOME OR ALL OF THOSE ARRESTED. NOT ALL OF TWELVE WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON STATEMENT HAVE BEEN DETAINED, NOTABLY KIM TAE-CHUNG, YUN PO-SUN, CHANG IL-HYONG, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND NDP ASSEMBLYMAN, HAM SOK-HAN THE QUAKER.

6. COMMENT: FACT THAT CHURCH PEOPLE COULD PLAN AND CARRY OFF MEETING AND STATEMENT WITHOUT AUTHORITIES KNOWING ABOUT IT REVEALS THAT THEY HAVE LEARNED HOW TO OPERATE IN TIGHTLY CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT. GOVERNMENT HOWEVER CAN BE EXPECTED TO RETIGHTEN CONTROLS AND WE ANTICIPATE STRONG MEASURES MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST SOME OFFENDERS AS EXAMPLE TO OTHERS.  
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## Message Attributes

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